

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board
November 9, 2005
6:00pm
City Hall L280

Present: McCarthy, Ketcherside, Vice, Healy, Fellows, DeFrank, Staeheli, Charles Smith (former member).

Absent: Clark, Koengeter, Tachibana.

SDOT Staff: Megan Hoyt

6:00 Pete Lagerwey, SDOT.

Sidewalk Funding

Good news. Mayor's budget has \$500K for new sidewalks in addition to neighborhood street fund and CRF., Lots of people are clamoring for sidewalks.

Guiding objectives in the pedestrian program are to reduce crashes and increase walking. This helps to define priorities for building new sidewalks. SPAB should be the first contact for reviewing the project list. [Hands out a letter with the guidelines.] I want SPAB's formal approval on this.

In short: Arterial streets, school walking routes, transit stops (which are mostly on arterials), pedestrian generators -- and especially spaces where these overlap. School walking routes are a problem because there are so many schools with sidewalk needs, so we're talking within one block of schools.

Other criteria: missing links, seniors and people with disabilities, avoiding high cost, and opportunities to piggyback on other public and private projects. Piggybacking came come with a cost, though, because one-off projects (neither one of us understood what one-off projects were... So the sentence didn't totally make sense) are expensive.

Amster-Burton: How much sidewalk can this build?

Lagerwey: 4-6 block sides. Hopefully this will create more demand and ensure more funding in the future.

Smith: Like the building of the Burke-Gilman trail.

Lagerwey: Yes. We're looking for momentum, visibility, high-profile.

Fellows: My neighborhood group is going to say: we spent years developing neighborhood plans, and this letter doesn't reference it. The comp plan says development should be channeled to urban villages, and this doesn't recognize that either. Third, is this a way to avoid dealing with the district councils? With six blocks, there should be a much

narrower set of criteria, and they should be consistent with the comp plan and neighborhood plans. I'd like to avoid an unnecessarily contentious situation where SPAB is stuck in the middle.

Lagerwey: Those are good points, but first, I hesitate to come back with specific project lists because I want the board to help set broader public policy. We're not making an inventory or needs list -- this is two pages of criteria for 4-6 blocks.

On the neighborhood plans, that's what the neighborhood street fund and CRF are for. Second, neighborhood plans have two parts: general policy language, and then only a few identify specific locations. Of the 38 neighborhood plans, this meets the spirit and intent of almost all of them; 3-5 of the plans list specific locations.

Fellows: Another issue is that some neighbors want to pursue matching private money. If you want to entertain that, you should be specific about when and how.

Lagerwey: That's one thing that "opportunities" means. I'll be more explicit.

Healy: Will there be enough money every year to build 4-6 blocks?

Lagerwey: The budget covers one year. Part of the reason I'm here is to do a good job the first year and get funded in subsequent years.

Healy: Is the goal to make all sidewalks connect?

Lagerwey: That's one criterion we would use, but it has to be in conjunction with other factors like proximity to a school.

Healy: Suppose one side doesn't have a sidewalk but the other side does. Is that a missing link?

Lagerwey: The policy on arterials is to have sidewalks on both sides. On residential streets it's less of a priority.

Stacheli: The number of blocks needs to be in the letter.

Lagerwey: OK.

Bike Master Plan

There will be between \$150K and \$350K for a bike master plan starting January 1.

Why should SPAB care? (1) Bike and ped needs don't always coincide. (2) But we also have a lot in common, and the Pedestrian Master Plan is probably coming next.

[Handout covers need for and scope of BMP]

There is a wayfinding element to this that is like a three-legged stool. There are the actual signs, the maps, and the web site. The signs are the part that we don't actually have now, and the bike signs should have companion ped signs. On the ped side, we don't really have any of them.

Fellows: Is this a consultant effort?

Lagerwey: Yes.

Fellows: Are you going to assume the existing set of bike routes, or might some be changed?

Lagerwey: We need to go beyond that and look at better alternatives that might work in the future. Example: The Dexter bike lanes. Westlake is flatter but it doesn't have bike lanes because it's classified as a truck street. The plan could call for a road diet on Westlake with bike lanes. But we don't need a complete survey to come up with those locations; knowledgeable people already know them.

Fellows: That's the example I had in mind.

Lagerwey: There will also be a technical advisory group (probably via email) that could provide feedback on a regular basis.

6:38 Introductions

Featuring...

Celeste Gilman, prospective board member.

Jeremy Whiting, prospective board member.

6:40 Elections

Slate nominated by Fellows, second by Staeheli. Slate is adopted: Jodie Vice, Chair. Molly McCarthy, Vice Chair. Chris Tachibana, Secretary (with rotating secretary while she's out of town; Amster-Burton will serve as secretary through December 2005).

6:41 Round robin

Staeheli: The pizza is coming at 8:00. There are 400 entries for the children's calendar. Tonight we'll shortlist 60.

Hoyt: Each month needs a pedestrian safety message, too, so think of some of those. I need to get the web site updated. We need minutes and annual reports.

Vice: Defrank and I attended the budget hearing last Thursday and it was absolute chaos. I delivered a budget letter to the councilmembers this afternoon.

Ketcherside: I'm moving to Tokyo, so this is probably my last meeting.

McCarthy: I drove to work yesterday and got a parking ticket and got towed in the same day. It was \$118 plus \$38. I'm not driving to work anymore. I did make some flyers to put on people's windshields when they park on the sidewalk, and I'll send out a PDF so you can be vigilantes, too.

Fellows: Now I am THE ONLY ROB. I have an anecdote. When they closed the bus tunnel, there's a light at Prefontaine that is malfunctioning. It turns green, and when it turns red, the walk light should come on, but it doesn't. I wrote to the city engineer and they're going to change it, but it will take months.

Ketcherside: There's a light at 5th and Washington with the same problem. Who did you contact?

Fellows: There's a web site where you can report signal problems.

Hoyt: If in doubt, using the SDOT web comment form.

Fellows: There's a draft coming out of my group's design guidelines for transit facilities, which includes an appendix on ped facilities. We're out of money, but if someone wants to take a look, great.

Staeheli: The SDOT ROWIM chapter 4, I confess, I didn't review the latest version, but I did look at the curb radius section. That's the number one issue there: the guidelines show a 25' radius for new improvements. We need to make this an agenda item.

Healy: Has anything happened with the Weller Street Overpass?

Ketcherside: Sort of. Now the bridge is open all the time but the elevator is off from 10pm-5am. Sounds like a lawsuit waiting to happen.

Defrank: Went to the budget meeting with Jodie. I've started looking into waterfront development issues. Problem I've noted: new crosswalks are incredibly slippery (noted this in Shoreline and Everett).

Hoyt: We seem to have improved this with the thermoplastic mix used in Seattle.

Ketcherside: What waterfront thing?

Defrank: Viaduct and sculpture park.

Amster-Burton: Thanks for having me as chair. Question about T-intersections of 15th Avenue E: in two places, they've posted legal parking in an unmarked crosswalk. Should I call SDOT and ask them to fix it?

Staeheli: From a pedestrian standpoint, I think it's worth losing the parking spaces here. It's illegal to park in a T intersection, and they will come and fix it.

Hoyt: A citizen complaint would likely be needed to start the process to get this removed.

Tachibana (from Copenhagen, via Amster-Burton): I emailed Barbara Gray to say that I liked the stronger language in the ROW manual, but thought that ANY change in curb radius, especially wider, should require documentation and approval. But I didn't hear anything back.

I also had a story from before I left. I met a tourist on the Fremont bridge, who was trying to walk from Lake Union to the Ballard Locks. She had a miserable tourism Seattle map that made it look like Nickerson would go directly there, but it gets crazy around the Ballard Bridge. It was really hard to give her advice about how to get there! Why isn't there an uninterrupted walking path directly from Lake Union to the Locks?

Smith: She should take the Burke-Gilman trail.

Hoyt: There's going to be a trail there soon.

Smith: I think it's already there.

Staeheli: I got a call from the Parks Foundation to be on a committee called something like Green Band. It's sort of a followup to the Blue Ring, I think. But they didn't know I was on the ped board, and they were pleased to find that I was. I'll let you know how it goes.

7:10 Upcoming agenda items

December: Aurora Corridor Project

January: Pike-Pine crosswalk study

McCarthy: Let's get SPD in to talk about their ped safety presentations to schoolkids.

Fellows: When should we start talking about the Ped Master Plan?

Staeheli: At the retreat.

7:12 Public Comment

Celeste Gilman: I was just in Las Vegas for work and came back with a fresh appreciation for Seattle's pedestrian environment. Vegas is pure sprawl.

7:14 Adjourn